“We create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world”

William J. Johnston Middle School
Program of Studies

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Welcome

William J. Johnston Middle School is committed to embracing the spirit of the changing adolescent. In a community where respect for self and others is highly valued, each student is empowered to employ high standards in taking responsibility to make good

personal and academic choices. As the middle school student embarks upon a search for identity, WJJMS strives to nurture the whole child. Balance and stability are provided within a safe environment allowing the student to learn effectively and take the risks necessary to realize her/his ultimate potential.
We provide:

- a curriculum that challenges, integrates, and explores a variety of options,
- teaching and learning methods that are varied,
- student assessment and evaluation processes that promote learning,
- organizational structures that are flexible,
- programs and policies that promote health, wellness, and safety, and
- guidance and support services that are comprehensive.

School Mascot: The Puma
School Colors: Royal Blue and White
Motto: "*Puma Pride!*"
Ethos: "Embracing the Spirit of the Changing Adolescent!"

Why Teams?

Young people go through more rapid and dramatic changes during the years between ten and fifteen than at any other time in their lives. Early adolescence is a time of tremendous variability among students: they grow at different rates intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally and morally. With young adolescents, the achievement of academic success is highly dependent upon their other developmental needs being met. Education has responded on a national level to the needs of these young adolescents through the creation of an educational structure that responds to this unique developmental level.
At the middle level, both students and teachers are grouped into teaching "teams." Each team consists of sixty to one-hundred-twenty-five students, with four core academic teachers. Within the team structure, mathematics, language arts, social studies, and science are taught.

Core Values

To ensure a positive and safe learning environment, we use a school-wide, common language that establishes consistent daily expectations. Students will be taught the school's four core values: **Be Respectful**, **Be Responsible**, **Be Honest**, **Be Safe**.

To show **respect**, means:

- You think good things about who a person is or how he/she acts. You can have respect for others, and you can have respect for yourself.
- Showing respect to someone means you act in a way that shows you care about their feelings and well-being.
- Showing respect for others include things like not calling people mean names, treating people with courtesy, caring enough about yourself that you don't do things you know can hurt you.

To be **responsible**, means:

- Doing the things we are supposed to do, and accepting the positive or negative outcome of our actions.

To be **honest**, means:

- Speak and act truthfully.
- Examples of what speaking the honest truth means:
    - Honesty means you don't say things about people that aren't true. Being honest means you admit to your actions, even if you'll get in trouble.
    - Honesty means you explain how a situation really happened.

To be **safe**, means:

- Protection from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying, and the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds.

Course Requirements

6th Grade

Each sixth grade student is required to take one full year of English, Math, Social Studies and Science. Students will explore all Applied Academics, Health, and Career Technical courses for one quarter. They will also take Physical Education for two quarters of the year.

7th Grade

Each seventh grade student is required to take one full year of English, Math, World Cultures, and Science. Students will have the option to take World Language.* They may choose between Spanish or French. Students choose two Applied Academics and/or Career Technical courses. In addition, grade 7 students are enrolled into a Physical Education course for two quarters.

8th Grade

Each eighth grade student is required to take a full year of English, Math, US History, and Science. Students who took World Language in seventh grade will continue to take the second half of year 1 World Language in eighth grade.* Students choose two Applied Academics or Career Technical courses. In addition, grade 8 students are enrolled into a Physical Education course for two quarters.

Embedded Skills

Research and technology skills are embedded into the curriculum with the assistance of our Library Media Specialist.

Health Topics for sixth through eighth grade include but are not limited to:

- Developmental guidance lessons
- Time from PE
- Topics Covered in Science class
- Special Programming (~~Safe Futures~~Presentations related to current topics, ~~Law Enforcement Presentations,~~ Special Assemblies, Community Conversations~~?~~)

*Some students may receive Special Education or additional support in lieu of World Language.

Achievements

Grading Scales

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	97-100	C	73-76
A	93-96	C-	70-72

A-	90-92	D+	67-69
B+	87-89	D	63-66
B	83-86	D-	60-62
B-	80-82	F	59 or below
C+	77-79		

Honor Roll

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 must receive a B- or better in all their subjects to receive Honor Roll recognition. Grades will not be averaged. Students will be honored and recognized each quarter for Honor Roll.

Awards

Students are rewarded for academic achievement, outstanding performance and for "being caught doing something good!" Some awards offered at WJJMS are the following:

George Petkaitis Band Award	Helen B. Gay Memorial Award	Student of the Month
Presidential Excellence	High Achievement Award	Sustained Effort Award

Applied Academics

Our Applied Academic programs include providing our students with alternative and unique ways to formulate questions and opinions as well as creatively solve problems and express meaning along with different points of view. For more detailed information regarding our Applied Academic curriculum please visit https://www.colchesterct.org/. Under the departments tab click on teaching and learning and then on curriculum.

Art

6th Grade Art

Students in 6th grade work on building foundations, experience, and confidence in developing individual art skills. They learn about and practice with different tools, methods, skills and techniques in; drawing, painting, and clay. All of the Elements, and Principles of Design are covered. Students will learn about; different kinds of Line and line qualities, shapes, the color wheel, textures, perspective drawing, acrylic painting on canvas, clay, shaded drawings, and more based on the supplies budget.

7th Grade Art

Students in 7th grade work further on foundations to build upon the 6th grade general course skills. They work with; drawing, watercolor painting, sculpture (materials based on budget), and create soup bowls from clay for our Empty Bowls project. Many 7th grade art students start to recognize their artistic strengths during this year.

8th Grade Art

Students in 8th grade will continue to build on foundations from 6th and 7th grade, but more in depth to prepare for the High School level art courses. They delve into; drawing, painting, clay and sculpture. There is more allowance for a higher degree of personalized learning in 8th grade art as students have some good foundational understanding from previous grades.

Library Media

The library media program is centered on six foundations: Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Grow. Library media lessons are presented within content areas, providing lessons and opportunities for students to increase abilities to think, create, share, and grow within each of the foundations. Lessons build in sophistication from grade level to grade level, focusing in on acquiring new knowledge by thinking critically and solving problems, operate in a global society by interacting with and acknowledging the perspective of others, work with others to achieve common goals, collect, organize and share resources, harness curiosity and employ a growth mindset to explore and discover, and follow ethical and legal guidelines while engaging with information.

Students work on finding and evaluating information, using information in an ethical way, and following the rights and responsibilities of a digital citizen.

Music

6th Grade Band

The sixth grade band is open to all students and does not require an audition to participate. This ensemble focuses on the beginning fundamentals of playing in a group including rehearsal techniques and etiquette, breathing, rhythms, and tonal balance. Additionally, students will focus on improving their tone and technique during weekly lessons. Students will perform music from a variety of styles, time periods, and genres. ~~Students are required to attend two weekly rehearsals and to participate in two evening concerts. The sixth grade Band meets every Monday and Wednesday during 7th period workshop. Students with unexcused absences from rehearsals and concerts will receive a reduced grade. Students unable to attend performances due to extenuating circumstances will require a note from a parent or guardian. *Students who miss a concert are required to play the concert as a solo for Mr. Morrissette in order to earn a grade for the performance.* All members of the band program will be expected to march in the Memorial Day Parade. Preparation for this event will begin in March and will end on the fourth Sunday of May. Students will be expected to memorize their music and will learn to march in formation.~~

7th & 8th Grade Band

The seventh and eighth grade band is open to all students and does not require an audition to participate. This ensemble focuses on developing the fundamentals of playing in a group including rehearsal techniques and etiquette, breathing, rhythms, and tonal balance. Additionally, students will learn to play more difficult levels of music and sight read. Students will perform music from a variety of styles, time periods, and genres. ~~Students are required to attend two weekly rehearsals and to participate in three evening concerts. Eighth grade band will meet Tuesday & Thursday during their workshop and will eat lunch together from 11:01-12:14. Seventh grade band will meet Tuesday & Thursday during their workshop from 12:16-1:07pm. Students with unexcused absences from rehearsals and concerts will receive a reduced grade. Students unable to attend performances due to extenuating circumstances will require a~~

note from a parent or guardian. *Students who miss a concert are required to play the concert as a solo for Mr. Morrissette in order to earn a grade for the performance.* All members of the band program will be expected to march in the Memorial Day Parade. Preparation for this event will begin in March and will end on the fourth Sunday of May. Students will be expected to memorize their music and will learn to march in formation.

Jazz Band

Students must audition in order to be part of Jazz Band. *Please see Mr. Morrissette to schedule an audition time if you are interested.* Jazz band meets after school on Thursdays from 2-3:30pm. Transportation home is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. This is an elite group and they will do extra performances outside of the school day. Attendance is expected at all rehearsals and performances. Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to participate in Jazz Band.Students who participate in Jazz Band will learn the stylistic and rhythmic techniques for the five major jazz styles: swing, latin, rock, funk, and ballad. In addition, all students will learn to improvise melodies using a sequential system of instruction.

6th Grade Chorus

The sixth grade chorus is open to all students and does not require an audition to participate. This ensemble focuses on the fundamentals of singing in a group including rehearsal techniques and etiquette, breathing, vocal production and balance. Additionally, students will focus on independent part-singing in two and three parts and music literacy skills. Students will perform music from a variety of styles, time periods and genres. Students are required to attend two weekly rehearsals and to participate in two evening concerts. The sixth grade Concert Choir meets every Tuesday & Thursday during 7th period workshop. Students with unexcused absences from rehearsals and concerts will receive a reduced grade. Students unable to attend performances due to extenuating circumstances will require a note from a parent or guardian.

7th & 8th Grade Chorus

The seventh and eighth grade chorus is open to all students and does not require an audition to participate. This ensemble focuses on the fundamentals of singing in a group including rehearsal techniques and etiquette, breathing, vocal production and balance. Additionally, students will learn part-singing in three and four parts and concepts in music literacy such as reading notation and sight-singing. Students will perform music from a variety of styles, time periods and genres and may be required to sing in multiple languages. ~~Students are required to attend two weekly rehearsals and to participate in two evening concerts. The seventh grade Concert Choir meets every Monday and Wednesday during their 6th period workshop. The eighth grade Concert Choir meets every Monday & Wednesday during their 5th period workshop. Students with unexcused absences from rehearsals and concerts will receive a reduced grade. Students unable to attend performances due to extenuating circumstances will require a note from a parent or guardian.~~s.

Chamber Choir

The Chamber choir is made up of students from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. This advanced ensemble focuses on learning music in four or more parts. Students will perform music from a variety of styles, time periods and genres and will be required to sing in multiple languages. Students work on sight reading and sing acapella to enhance their ability to blend, sing with proper intonation, and expression. This group performs at other venues as well as in the winter and spring concerts. All students are required to audition. Acceptance into the Chamber Choir is based on these auditions~~ as well. The Chamber Choir meets after school on Tuesdays from 2-3:15pm. Transportation home is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. There will be performances outside of the school day as well. Attendance is expected at rehearsals and performances. Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to participate in Chamber Choir.~~

6th Grade General Music

The three ways of experiencing music are by creating, performing, and responding and connecting with other disciplines in real world applications. The students will use these

skills while learning about World Drumming. From the diverse repertoire that is studied, they will gain an understanding of music from varying cultural, historical, and stylistic perspectives. They will learn the names of and proper technique for playing various instruments. They will also perform in class together as an ensemble, and learn the importance of a drum circle.

7th Grade General Music

The three ways of experiencing music are by creating, performing, and responding and connecting with other disciplines in real world applications.
Students will learn the acoustic guitar. They learn to perform with proper technique, build on music literacy skills, and learn to critique compositions and performances. Students will develop critical listening skills by analyzing and evaluating their own performances and the performances of others.

8th Grade General Music

The three ways of experiencing music are by creating, performing, and responding and connecting with other disciplines in real world applications. Students will learn to play the keyboard or guitar. They will learn proper technique, build on literacy skills, and learn to critique performances. Students will develop critical listening skills by analyzing and evaluating their own performances and performances of others.
The students will also be using the music recording app Garageband on IPads. Students will work independently and in groups on projects that promote creativity, musicality, and innovation.

Physical Education

William J Johnston Middle School Physical Education provides a variety of experiences giving students multiple avenues to be successful in the physical realm. Units of instruction range from individual fitness related activities to traditional team type sports. Our middle school program will allow students to enter high school with a rich background of experiences to draw on when choosing activities to pursue in greater depth.

Adventure Education

Adventure Education is an instructional approach which incorporates the goals and techniques of Outward Bound and Project Adventure into a school setting. It is designed to develop balance, agility, coordination, and a willingness to try and trust, within a supportive class atmosphere. The project is divided into three areas: Problem solving Initiatives & Games, Low challenge elements and a High Ropes Challenge Course. Adventure is incorporated into the PE program in grades 6 & 8th and is an elective for grade 7.

Health

Students will have the opportunity to focus on topics related to social and emotional health and well being. Topics will include but are not limited to decision making, how to communicate effectively, understanding and managing their emotions, peer pressure, bullying, goal setting, Stress/anxiety management, understanding kindness / compassion/ empathy and interpersonal relationship skills. Students will have the opportunity to hear from guest speakers on related topics.

Teenagers face many challenges throughout their middle school years: physically, emotionally and socially. To address these challenges our school community has periodic seminars involving students in discussions related to leading a healthy lifestyle. Topics have included: Internet safety, appropriate use of social media, teen relationships and how to avoid the traps of substance use. These conversations vary by grade and may be held in a variety of settings.

Career Technical Education

Design and Engineering

The Design and Engineering Course at WJJMS is an introduction for students to the world of Technology Education. The course has a Pre-Engineering emphasis which teaches students how to take an idea, turn it into a design, then make it a reality. With each effort students have to brainstorm and research ideas, create detailed plans, learn how to build their projects, then test and evaluate the outcomes. Students learn to safely measure, handle and cut multiple materials. That's what we do in

D&E!

6th Grade - An Introduction To The World of Technology

Students in 6th grade begin learning structural engineering concepts while building balsa wood towers. They then explore elements of flight while building working airplane models and rockets. All students are encouraged to work at their own pace and to explore topics of their own choosing.

7th Grade - What Makes It Go?

Students in 7th grade spend most of their time designing, building, and racing individually designed CO2 Race Cars and compete for *Best Speed, Most Creative*, and *Best Paint Job*. Once completed, they are allowed to individualize their final projects.

8th Grade - Find Your Own Pathway to Technology

Students in 8th grade start out designing and building balsa wood bridges that are tested for strength. Once completed they are allowed to choose individualized projects ranging from electronic circuitry to woodworking and rocketry. Personal interest and creativity are encouraged!

Digital Applications

Technology is constantly evolving, and skills taught in the Digital Applications courses will prepare students to adapt to current trends, as well as prepare them for future advancements. As students progress through each class, more time will be spent on specific areas of focus, allowing students to specialize in content that most drives their interests.

Grade 6 Digital Media

This foundational course will provide 6th grade students with a basic understanding of professional software bundles and various online tools used in higher education as well as in the workforce. From coding a multiplayer video game in Scratch to building a community mobile app in Google Slides to designing a 3D world in CoSpaces, this class will let students demonstrate their creativity & innovation while using technology to

enhance productivity. Students learn to combine multiple skills with a variety of technological tools to develop critical thinking, problem solving and perseverance.

Grade 7 Video & Audio Production

Students in Video & Audio Production will learn the proper techniques in producing professional graphic designs, audio recordings and film productions. Topics of study include: design, composition, camera angles and movements, lighting, storyboarding, scripting, editing, proper microphone techniques and creating special effects. Software used in this course includes Adobe Premiere, Photoshop and After Effects, as well as iMovie and Garageband. Students will have the opportunity to pursue their specific area of interest. Classes will take place both in the computer lab and in our broadcast studio. Students will have the opportunity to serve on the crew of Puma News (our school's news show) and/or on Puma Press (our school's online digital magazine).

Grade 8 Programming

Students in Programming will learn the science behind block and text-based coding. After a refresher in the Scratch environment, students will learn how to write code to create animations and video games. These skills will be advanced by transitioning into developing basic apps for Android and iOS phones and tablets. Depending on individual interests, students can choose to study CS topics such as JavaScript, Python or HTML, create augmented or virtual reality content, learn advanced programming in Unity or Blender, and/or build a programming/Vex Robotics kit. In addition to providing a personal learning environment, this course will strengthen problem solving and critical thinking skills, as well as foster creativity, collaboration and reflection, through a major final self-selected project, which may include advanced programming topics or skills developed in prior Digital Applications courses.

Innovations

Innovations is an elective class that focuses on the integration of science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM). In Innovations, students are able to apply their skills, knowledge, and creativity to solve relevant real world problems and explore new ideas. During this course students will engage in hands-on activities and experiments to help them better understand their own problem solving processes and how to overcome obstacles by working together as a team.

Why Innovations? Our students at WJJMS are incredible young people with talents, skills, and interests that span many different areas. We want to help them understand how they can best develop and utilize their skills to solve problems in the world around them. This class will provide students with problem solving strategies, exercises to develop creative thinking, and projects that will utilize 21st century skills to bring student ideas to life.

6th Grade: STEAM Innovations

Students in 6th grade will work on the basic skills you need in order to solve problems and develop your own invention prototypes. Towards the start of the quarter, students work together in teams to solve hands-on STEAM challenges that require them to think outside of the box and put their creativity to the test as they practice problem solving. Students will learn the basic maker skills they need for constructing their own prototypes, including basic circuitry and cardboard sculpting techniques. At the end of the quarter, students will develop their own original problem solving invention prototype for the Connecticut Invention Convention.

7th Grade: WJJMS Shark Tank

Students in 7th grade focus on the skills and tools needed to turn an idea into a functioning business. Students work together to develop marketing campaigns and products for clients. Skills learned include the basics of 3D printing and computer assisted design, public speaking and applied sciences. At the end of the quarter, students will create and present a short Shark Tank style pitch to an audience of peers and professionals to communicate their idea for a new business or product that could help the community.

8th Grade: Exploring Advanced Innovations

Students will spend the first few weeks of the course working on small scale hands-on projects that explore different innovative technologies and the science concepts behind them. Throughout the quarter students will use tools such as 3D printers, remote controlled robots and laser cutters to create prototypes of their designs and ideas. The last weeks of the course will conclude with students designing their own final projects

and products based around personal interests or skills they want to develop related to STEAM. Students will present their final projects as a capstone for the class.

English Language Arts

6th Grade English Language Arts

Students in sixth grade English work on reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills. During the year they will write an informational paper, a narrative, and a literary analysis argument. The reading units focus on character analysis. Students are pushed to think more deeply about what they read and write through individual goal-setting and mini-lessons that teach specific skills, while conferring and connecting with the outside world in the bigger picture. In reading, instruction will include skills such as: locating and citing text evidence, determining theme, finding the central idea, using context clues to denote vocabulary, and learning to research. ~~Units include: Misunderstandings/Misperceptions, Struggles & Acceptance, Overcoming Adversity, Learning From the Past, History Repeats Itself, and Our Place in a Changing World. In addition students are required to read independently in choice books.~~

7th Grade English Language Arts

Students in 7th grade English class will continue to develop their reading, writing and communication skills. Units include: academic conversations, exploring cultural perspectives, inquiry on what shapes us as individuals, informational writing about reading, poetry, and realistic fiction. While whole class novels are used for modeling, students will also have free choice novels that support the reading units. Instruction will include skills such as: noticing signposts, questioning the author, analyzing literature, tracking themes across texts, and using multiple sources for research. The students demonstrate increasing independence in the novels that they choose to read to promote student engagement, and the students are expected to run their own book group meetings.

8th Grade English Language Arts

This course covers the Common Core Standards (grades 6-8) of reading, writing, language, and speaking/listening skills through the use of integrated units. Thematic writing units include memoir, journalism, literary argument, and informational/research writing. Thematic reading units include character study, literary nonfiction, and a dystopian fiction unit. A clear focus is on citing text evidence and the analysis and synthesis of that evidence to support student thinking and writing. Students continue work on characterization and extend their characterization to analyze elements such as speech, actionsion, and thoughts. Students pay attention to the authors' perspective and notice the moves that authors make to create interesting stories. Integrated into all units is vocabulary study, basic grammar mechanics and conventions review, and multi-dimensional speaking/presentation instruction. The reading/writing workshop model builds on the skills of 6th and 7th grade while giving students greater independence to choose how they respond to the texts they read.

Mathematics

6th Grade Math

The 6th grade math course follows the Common Core State Standards in both content and practice. Content focuses on four major topics: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking. Our practices encourage innovative approaches to problem solving. Students make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, while attending to precision. They notice patterns and apply mathematical rules. Appropriate tools are strategically used when reasoning abstractly and quantitatively. Students will also use communication skills to critique the reasoning of others and construct viable mathematical arguments.

7th Grade Math

The 7th grade math course follows the Common Core State Standards in both content and practice. Content topics include: number system - addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of rational numbers (positive and negative integers, fractions, and decimals); ratios and proportional relationships - rates, ratios, proportions, scaling, and percent; expressions and equations - using numerical and algebraic operations; geometry - two- and three-dimensional operations involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume; statistics and probability - using sampling to draw inferences about a population and examining theoretical and experimental probability to develop a probability model. Our practices encourage innovative approaches to problem solving. Students make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, while attending to precision. They notice patterns and apply mathematical rules. Appropriate tools are strategically used when reasoning abstractly and quantitatively. Students will also use communication skills to critique the reasoning of others and construct viable mathematical arguments.

An accelerated math class is offered to students who have demonstrated the aptitude and the drive to meet the demands of a faster paced curriculum allowing time for increased depth into each common core standard.

8th Grade ~~Pre-Algebra~~Math

The 8th Pre-Algebra course follows the Common Core State Standards in both content and practice. Content focuses on three major topics: (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem. Our practices encourage innovative approaches to problem solving. Students make sense of problems and persevere in solving them while attending to precision. They notice patterns and apply mathematical rules. Appropriate tools are strategically used when reasoning abstractly and quantitatively. Students will

also use communication skills to critique the reasoning of others and construct viable mathematical arguments.

~~8th Grade Algebra~~

~~The Algebra course offered to qualifying 8th graders follows the Common Core State Standards in both content and practice. It is the first high school course in a traditional college preparatory math sequence. The curriculum emphasizes problem solving and mathematical reasoning using real-world applications. Students will be required to use a variety of mathematical methods and representations to solve problems involving linear and non-linear applications. Students will have opportunities to analyze and evaluate information and will be required to demonstrate an ability to communicate clearly and concisely using appropriate mathematical vocabulary and notation as part of their problem solving. Technological literacy will be developed through regular use of a graphing calculator to enhance processing efficiency and investigate mathematical concepts.~~

Science

6th Grade Integrated Science

Students in sixth grade science will be using the Sixth Grade Integrated StemScopes program. This program is broken up into four segments which cover topics in life science, earth and space science and physical science. More specifically, Students develop a model that compares Earth's climate system and the human body system. Students design a portable structure that will keep athletes cool in hot climates and warm in cool climates. Students plan a new dog sled race similar to the Iditarod that will occur in the sand dunes of the Arabian Desert. Students address the effects of global warming on living systems by preparing an argument explaining why different groups should not have their water supply reduced and by participating in a debate with other groups to present their side of the argument. Within each segment, students will explore anchoring phenomena and will address the guiding questions.

7th Grade Integrated Science

Students in seventh grade science will be using the Seventh Grade Integrated StemScopes program. This program is broken up into four segments which cover topics in life science, earth and space science and physical science. More specifically, students will study organisms and nonliving things made of atoms, Matter Cycles and Energy Flows through Organisms and Rocks, Natural Processes and Human Activities Shape Earth's Resources and Ecosystems, and Sustaining Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in a Changing World. Within each segment, students will explore anchoring phenomena and will address the guiding questions. Each segment is further broken down into scopes as listed below.

8th Grade Integrated Science

Students in eighth grade science will be using the Eighth Grade Integrated StemScopes program. This program is broken up into four segments which cover topics in life science, earth and space science and physical science. More specifically, students will study how objects move and collide, they will be part of a shuttle crew completing a one-year (365 day) journey in space to collect data. Their primary duty is to create a video log of significant discoveries they make throughout their journey. Students create an original organism and determine how it evolved and added unity and diversity to life through the help of natural selection, and how science can predict the age and environment based on clues from rock and fossils. Finally, students design a device to detect the number of different bat and dolphin species on an island uninhabited by humans.

Social Studies

6th Grade: Global Studies

Students investigate world issues thematically and geographically with a focus on Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Oceania. Students will examine current events through the lens of the Global Goals and the impacts on human and earth systems; as well as exploring local and global issues by collaborating with others to develop inquiries into innovative solutions. Students use digital tools to connect with learners from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, engaging with them in ways that broaden mutual

understanding and learning. Additionally, there is a focus on the priority standards the curriculum committee committed students to practice and master in 6th-grade reading, speaking and listening, writing and inquiry skills throughout the year.

7th Grade World Cultures: The Western Hemisphere

7th grade World Cultures allows students the opportunity to investigate and explore our world through both content (often based off of the students' own questions) and skills. In terms of content, students, using the lens of geography, will discover, appreciate, explore and connect to the history, economy, government and culture of the many different regions of the Western Hemisphere, including Central America and the Caribbean, South America and Europe. Skill wise, the focus on ten priority standards allows students the opportunity to practice and master 7th-grade reading, speaking and listening, writing and inquiry skills throughout the year. Specifically, students will closely read and analyze both primary and secondary sources (non-fiction texts, images, videos, etc), participate in a wide range of collaborative discussions (ex: "fishbowls"), and produce clear and coherent informational (ex: a natural disaster infographic) and argumentative writing (ex: Europe inquiry project) to diverse audiences.

8th Grade U.S. History I

Students will study United States History, to develop historical writing, research, and analytical skills while exploring America's rich history from the earliest European immigrants through the Civil War. Students will take a multi-disciplinary approach to American History, incorporating geography, economics, and civics to promote a deep and comprehensive understanding of historical events. A strong focus of this course is on fostering inquiry skills and supporting the English/Language Arts curriculum in developing strong, confident writers. Inquiry-based projects include a Colonial Study/Comparison, Western Expansion and its impact geographically and culturally, and a study of the evolution of slavery over this time period.

Special Services

Bases

BASES is the Behavioral Cohort program at the Middle School. BASES stands for Behavioral, Academic, and Social-Emotional Support, and serves students across all 3 grades. The program is designed to work with Special Education students to serve their individual needs. BASES fosters development in all areas for students, encoring them to grow, while providing a home base for support. Staff work closely with students, regular education teachers, support staff such as a Social Worker, and parents to ensure whole child development. The Special Education Teacher in BASES also works with regular education teachers regarding materials, current coursework, and when students are able they are able to join classes on their assigned team. Placement in this program is determined by a Planning and Placement Team (PPT). Academic areas are also addressed within BASES, to accommodate students who have difficulty with larger class sizes, as well as students who have apparent gaps in learning that need to be addressed. Curriculum is tailored to meet student need and to close these gaps, both socially/emotionally and academically.

Program Description

English Learner Program (EL or ESL)

The program is designed for Non-Native English speakers to provide students with the English communication skills necessary for successful participation in the mainstream classroom. Students meet with the district's English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certified teacher during each grade level's workshop period and focus specifically on the English language vocabulary, grammar, and skills necessary to be successful within each content-based classroom.

For students who are new arrivals to the country the focus of work is on basic reading and writing, vocabulary development, speaking and listening skills as well as gaining a stronger understanding of content area specific vocabulary. These skills are important in order to participate in mainstream classrooms.

For students who have higher English proficiency skills the focus of work is on more advanced reading, writing, and comprehension skills, so that students can better understand classroom assignments, edit and revise writing assignments more independently, and a continuation of building both academic and content vocabulary.

In order to exit English Learner support services students are assessed annually and must meet the State of Connecticut's mandated exit criteria. Upon exiting English Learner support services, it is required that students be monitored for a two year period to ensure continued academic success.

Intensive Reading

The Intensive Reading program is a code based instruction class. The students enter the program through the PPT process and have a severe discrepancy in the area of reading decoding when compared to grade level peers. Usually the students are exempted from ~~a history or~~ a world language class in order to provide services. The students will become accurate and automatic readers when instruction in decoding and phonemic awareness is systematic, sequential, and prescriptive. Daily instruction includes, but is not limited to the following: Phonemic awareness through Lindamood, Reading decoding through SRA, WIlson, Orton Gillingham and other research based programs, phonetic and high frequency spelling, syllabication strategies, comprehension and vocabulary development, reading and spelling rules, daily fluencies, assistive technology practice, any goals and objectives from a student's IEP.

The program is individualized according to the student's learning style needs and IEP. Different programs may be utilized according to student need and will change each year as necessary.
The decision to exit is an individualized determination made by a PPT. It is based on standardized data and skills. Either the student's goals are met or it may be determined at the PPT that minimal progress has been made and the student may benefit from a different curriculum.

Materials used: Let's Read, Wilson Reading, SRA Corrective Reading, Lindamood- BEll, Rewards program, Read Naturally, Dolch Words, Orton Gillingham., the student's own independent reading book, Morphographs- SRA, vocabulary- teacher made- vocabulary word of the day, assistive technology.

Students also in later grades learn how they learn best. We discuss their learning style and practice active study techniques. Emphasis is on time management, chunking assignments, reflection of techniques used. Reflection of mindful habits in mainstream classes is also incorporated when time permits. Bridging the skills learned in Intensive Reading to other mainstream classes is the ultimate goal. Time is spent at first creating this in a deliberate and modeled way. Eventually, students take on the responsibility of showing how they are using their reading, spelling and study techniques in mainstream classes.

Life Skills Program

The life skills program is designed to help students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to become successful individuals and lifelong learners. Based on individual needs and strengths, the program is designed to structure student's learning experiences, which enable the highest level of independence. Basic living skills such as cooking, cleaning, personal hygiene, etiquette, shopping, ordering at a restaurant, making healthy choices, self-advocacy, social interactions, leisure time, navigating the school and community and establishing meaningful friends and interests are important building blocks of independence and a safe, fulfilling life. The goal is not perfection, but exposure, growth and function. The appropriate skills and expected level of mastery are addressed during the PPT process and the creation of the Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Acquiring and mastering Life Skills is a continuum which spans throughout an individual's life. Teaching life skills tasks requires modeling, visuals, explicit directions and practice, using carefully structured sequential steps.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy practitioners are occupational therapists (OTs) and occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) who use meaningful activities (occupations) to help children and youth participate in what they need and/or want to do in order to promote physical and mental health and well-being. Occupational therapy addresses physical, cognitive, social/emotional, sensory, and other aspects of performance. In schools, occupational therapy practitioners focus on academics, play and leisure, social participation, self-care skills (ADLs, or Activities of Daily Living), and transition/work skills. Occupational

therapy's expertise includes activity and environmental analysis and modification with a goal of reducing the barriers to participation.

Occupational therapy practitioners have specific knowledge and expertise to increase participation in school routines throughout the day. Interventions include:

- Conducting activity and environmental analysis and making recommendations to improve the fit for greater access, progress, and participation
- Reducing barriers that limit student participation within the school environment
- Providing assistive technology to support student success
- Supporting the needs of students with significant challenges, such as by helping to determine methods for alternate educational assessment and learning
- Helping to identify long-term goals for appropriate post-school outcomes
- Helping to plan relevant instructional activities for ongoing implementation in the classroom
- Preparing students for successfully transitioning into appropriate post–high school employment, independent living, and/or further education

School-based occupational therapists observe, assess, and address the child's strengths and needs within the natural school settings (e.g., classroom, lunchroom, playground) in order to support the student's educational program. Services may be directed to the child and on behalf of the child in the school environment (e.g., training educational staff).

Service determinations are made by the 504 committee or IEP team in collaboration with the occupational therapist. Parents are a part of the IEP team or 504 team who make all service decisions.

Physical Therapy

School based Physical Therapy is a related service provided to assist children with special needs to access the school environment and curriculum. Physical therapy treatment in the school will focus on the child's ability to negotiate the environment including stairs, playground equipment, restrooms, cafeteria, and classrooms. Therapy can also focus on strengthening and mobility to assist the child in maintaining / changing positions in the classroom as well as improving their ability to participate in activities with their peers.

School Counseling

Middle school counselors are professional educators that are uniquely trained to implement a comprehensive developmental school counseling program. They provide support to all students in the following ways: School Counseling Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services and System Support. This includes, but is not limited to, individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultation and collaboration, school wide programming, and classroom lessons.

Classroom lessons in each grade will cover academic, career and personal/social skills. They focus on nine content standards and create lessons which include but are not limited to topics around bullying, respect for self and others, school success, career skills, survival and safety skills.

Special Education

Special Education Placement in Special Education is determined by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT). Students who experience difficulty with the regular education curriculum will first be referred to the PASS (Personalized Academic and Social Success) Team. The PASS team will then review the student's academic and behavioral record, and provide general education accommodations that are appropriate to the student's level of need through tiered interventions. If the student's response to intervention does not result in the intended outcomes established by the PASS team, a PPT (Planning and Placement Team) may be convened to next evaluate the student for eligibility in Special Education. A referral to Special Education can, however, be made at any time by a parent/caregiver. If after this comprehensive evaluation it is determined a student qualifies for Special Education and requires specialized instruction, the PPT will develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Special Education teachers consult with general education teachers regarding individual students, alternative or modified materials, and/or behavioral and instructional strategies. Co-teaching is available in some core Academic classes in each grade as well, typically Math and English.

SRBI

An intensive course designed to provide students the support that they need in either reading or math. Each student's individual strengths and areas of concern are taken into account to provide students with opportunities to advance their reading or math skills. Instruction is informed by frequent assessment of skills and teaching takes place in small groups with individualized attention given to each student.

World Language

Grade 7 & 8 World Language

Our World Language curriculum works with the four skills of language learning: listening, reading, writing and speaking. We also emphasize the five goals of learning languages: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities. We use Comprehensible Input to help students acquire a language which means less focus on learning grammar rules and vocabulary lists and more focus on true communication, both oral and written.

Using the interpersonal, presentational and interpretive modes, 7th grade students will be able to: meet and greet friends and adults, describe people and things, discuss what they do in school and in their free time, and be able to talk about clothing and its cultural relevance.

Using the same modes, 8th grade students will add to this knowledge by learning about how they use technology in comparison to other students around the world, where they might like to travel, and the cultural traditions which appertain to countries that they have studied as well as their own.

~~Successful completion of 7th and 8th grade World Language counts as one credit towards Bacon graduation requirements.~~**Beginning with the graduating class of 2025, students who complete grade 7 world language and complete and pass the same world language (e.g., Spanish and Spanish) in grade 8 at WJ will earn 1.0 World Language credit towards graduation.**

Workshop

Workshop is a flexible period embedded in every student schedule that allows the WJ staff to support and enrich each of our students. Students that are not involved in an enrichment program or that receive support during this time may work on completing class assignments, projects and homework.

Workshop provides an opportunity for students to receive extra help from teachers if a concept or skill was not understood during the class period, and to make up for missed work and tests due to absences.

Some of the support provided during this time include working with SRBI math and reading teachers, Special Education teachers on organization and goals, counseling or support services, OT/PT, and speech services. Our enrichment includes but is not limited to rehearsals for band and chorus, as well as clubs, independent STEAM projects and Adventure class.

Clubs and Activities

After School Clubs

We offer a variety of after school clubs throughout the year. Clubs vary from quarter to quarter and are based on interest and availability. Some of the clubs offered are homework help, baking, board games, drawing and painting, science bowl and martial arts.

MATHCOUNTS

MATHCOUNTS Competition Series is a national program that provides students the opportunity to compete in live, in-person math contests against their peers. Created in 1983, it is the longest-running MATHCOUNTS program and it is open to all sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. This club meets 3 times a month and we begin in September and end in March. In the past WJJMS has sent 10 students to the regional competition.

Ski & Snowboard Club

The WJJMS Ski and Snowboard club (for 6th, 7th and 8th graders) travels after school every Friday in January to Ski Sundown in New Hartford, CT. Whether you are just learning how to ski or snowboard or have been going your whole life, this club can be

for you. All packages include bus transportation and teacher chaperones and can include lift ticket only, lesson and/or rental options (depending on your needs). Registration is in early October, so be on the lookout for information early in the school year...it is a very popular club and spots fill quickly.

Sports/Athletics

WJJMS offers three seasons of sports, fall, winter and spring. We are a member of the Mid-State Middle School League.

Basketball

In the winter, we run Interscholastic and Intramural Basketball programs with separate girl's and boy's teams**.** Interscholastic travels to other schools to compete. This season runs from mid-November through the end of January. The Intramural basketball program is run as an after school program where students play basketball against their classmates. Intramurals runs from the first week in February through mid-March

Cross Country Club

Cross country is a running club open to all 6th, 7th and 8th graders who attend William J. Johnston. The club meets four times a week and introduces students to distance running and racing. As part of the program, students start with shorter runs in September and build up their endurance over a several month period until the program ends in early November. Normal practices include a mix of warm up activities, running games, interval training with a stress upon learning proper techniques for training. As part of the program, athletes usually participate in 4-6 races with other middle schools which include the State Middle School Championships held at Wickham Park. ~~Interested athletes and parents should contact Mr.Browning at Sbrow203@colchesterct.org for more information. Signups take place in early September and students are charged an activity fee of $180.00 to participate in the program.~~

Soccer

In the fall, we have the Interscholastic Soccer program with both a boy's team and a girl's team. Interscholastic Soccer begins in September and runs through the end of

October. Interscholastic Soccer is a program that gives students the opportunity to play soccer after school against other school teams.

Track and Field

In the spring, we run our co-ed Interscholastic Track & Field program (both girls and boys on the same team but events are run by gender). Track runs from mid-March and culminates with the Middle School State Championships at the end of May.